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# 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Rhode Island Oral Health Summit

March 29, 2006



On March 29, 2006, the Oral Health Program, Office of Primary Care, Division of Community Health & Equity convened the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual RI Oral Health Summit at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Warwick. The Summit assembled more than 100 stakeholders representing the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors and was held in conjunction with the RI Senate Commission on Oral Health, which is chaired by Senator Elizabeth Roberts. Participants provided feedback on the *Draft RI Oral Health Plan*, a future-focused, five-year framework for action that builds upon recommendations developed by the Senate Commission in 2001.

David Gifford, MD, MPH, Director of Health, offered opening remarks acknowledging that oral health is a critical component of general health, and Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director, RI Kids Count, served as the Summit moderator. An overview of current oral health issues in key focal areas was provided by Jill Beckwith, MPH, Policy Analyst, RI Kids Count, Martha Dellapenna, RDH, MEd, Oral Health Access Project Manager, RI Department of Human Services, Owen Heleen, Director of Special Funds, The RI Foundation, and Virginia Paine, RN, MPH, Health & Nutrition Manager, Woonsocket Head Start.

During the stakeholder feedback session, Summit participants endorsed the proposed goals and associated action steps/priority strategies. The goals for the new plan are as follows:

- 1) Remove known barriers between people and oral health services;
- 2) Effectively apply science and best practices to improve oral health;
- 3) Develop a comprehensive oral disease prevention and health promotion system;
- 4) Maintain a safety-net infrastructure and ensure an adequate, effective oral health workforce; and
- 5) Ensure adequate and appropriate information is available for effective policy decisions.

Once finalized, the RI Oral Health Plan will be widely disseminated to policymakers and stakeholders and serve as a framework for oral health initiatives throughout RI.

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